

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 EPG-02
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8219
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 7861

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, UR, US
SUBJECT: SOVIET CIVIL AIRCRAFT

REF: MOSCOW 7849

1. DURING LUNCHEON MEETING JUNE 1 WITH E/C COUNSELOR AND
EMBOFF, REFTEL, V.D. SAMORUKHOV, MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION,
SAID THAT THE TU-144 IS STILL FLYING WEEKLY TO ALMA-ATA
CARRYING CARGO, BUT NOT PASSENGERS, AND THAT ONLY ONE
FLIGHT SO FAR HAS BEEN CONDUCTED TO KHABAROVSK. HE
REFERRED TO DIFFICULTIES WITH THE AIRCRAFT, WHICH HE
DID NOT SPECIFY OTHER THAN BY REFERENCE TO NOISE. HE
NOTED THAT CONCORDE FLEW MAINLY OVER WATER WHEREAS
INTERNAL TU-144 ROUTES WOULD BE OVER POPULATED AREAS.
PROTOCOL CHIEF KURKOV OF THE MINISTRY THEN VOLUNTEERED
THAT IT WAS "NOT AN EASY MATTER" TO OPERATE THIS AIRCRAFT.

2. ACCORDING TO SAMORUKHOV, THE IL-86 IS STILL IN THE
TESTING STAGE WITH THE MINISTRY OF THE AVIATION INDUSTRY.
TEST RUNS CARRYING PASSENGERS ARE EXPECTED SOON. THE
AIRCRAFT IS EXPECTED TO BE IN SERVICE ONLY AT THE END OF
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THE CURRENT FIVE-YEAR PLAN, I.E., 1980.

3. SAMORUKHOV ALSO SAID THE SOVIETS WILL PERMIT CHARTER
FLIGHTS FOR THE 1980 OLYMPICS BUT THEIR STRONG PREFERENCE
IS FOR VISITORS TO COME ON REGULARLY SCHEDULED FLIGHTS
AS THIS WOULD FACILITATE HANDLING. ASKED IF USSR WAS
CONSIDERING BUILDING HOTEL AT SECONDARY AIRPORT VNUKOVO,

SAMOURKHOV RESPONDED THAT NEW HOTEL WOULD BE BUILT ONLY AT SHEREMETYEVO.

4. SAMORUKHOV SAID AEROFLOT'S ATTENTION IS CONCENTRATED ON AFRICA IN DEVELOPING NEW ROUTES RATHER THAN ON SOUTH AMERICA (AEROFLOT LANDS ONLY IN LIMA, HE SAID) BECAUSE OF VERY GREAT DISTANCES INVOLVED IN CASE OF LATTER CONTINENT. HE SAID THERE ARE NO PRESENT PLANS FOR MEXICAN AIRLINES TO SERVICE MOSCOW. AEROFLOT SERVICE TO MEXICO CITY BEGINS THIS MONTH, REFTTEL.

5. COMMENT: THE TONE OF THE COMMENTS ON THE TU-144 INDICATE THAT SUBSTANTIAL PROBLEMS REMAIN AND THAT REGULAR PASSENGER SERVICE IS STILL NOT IMMINENT.
MATLOCK

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